# THE WOMAN'S DREADNOUGHT

**Published by the East London Federation of the Suffragettes.**

**Edited by SYLVIA PANKHURST.**

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**All donations in money or kind should be addressed to the Financial Secretary of the E.L.F.S. :—**

**Miss N. L. Smyth,**
**400 Old Ford Road, Bow, E.**

## THIS WEEK'S MEETINGS.

Friday, May 28th—Decorated Cart—start at 4 p.m. from 20 Railway Street.
Saturday, May 29th—Decorated Cart—start at 4 p.m. from 400 Old Ford Road.
**Sunday, May 30th—VICTORIA PARK DEMONSTRATION.**
Monday, May 31st, 8 p.m.—Lesbia Road—Mrs. Bouvier.
8 p.m.—"Peacock"—Mrs. Walker. Chair: Miss Manicom.
8 p.m.—Sturry St.—Mr. Everett. Chair: Mrs. Drake.
Tuesday, June 1st, 3 p.m.—175 Dalston Lane—Mrs. Moor. Chair: Miss Manicom.
3 p.m.—Bow Women's Hall—Mr. E. Duval Chair: Mrs. Bouvier.
8 p.m.—Salmon Lane—Mrs. Davies.
8 p.m.—Poplar, 20 Railway Street—Mrs. Schlette. Chair: Mrs. Drake.
Wednesday, June 2nd, 8 p.m. — Poplar, Chrisp Street—Mr. J. C. Rowe. Chair: Mrs. Drake.
8 p.m.—Ford Road—Miss P. Lynch.
Thursday, June 3rd, 8 p.m.—124 Barking Road—Mrs. Davies. Chair: Mrs. Parsons
8 p.m.—53 St. Leonard St—Mrs. Cyon.
8 p.m.—175 Dalston Lane—Mrs. Walker.
Friday, June 4th, 3 p.m.—Poplar Women's Hall—Miss P. Lynch. Chair: Mrs. Drake
8 p.m.—Piggott Street—Mr. Mackinlay. Chair: Mrs. Drake.
8 p.m.—Beckton Road—Mrs. Walker.
Sunday, June 6th, 3 p.m.—Hyde Park—Miss Elsa Myers. Chair: Mrs. Walker.
8 p.m.—Bow Women's Hall—Miss Sylvia Pankhurst, Miss Mary Richardson.

**SUFFRAGE CLUBS.** Poplar, 20 Railway St., 7 to 10 p.m., Tuesdays and Fridays.
Bow, 400 Old Ford Road, Fridays and Mondays 7 to 10. p.m.

**To reach Old Ford Road take an Old Ford 'bus (No. 8), which goes via the Marble Arch, Oxford St., the Bank and Liverpool St., or book to Old Ford Station on the North London Railway.**

## MOTHERS AND BABIES.

**We urgently need subscriptions to help us to pay the heavy milk bill for our centres in Bow, Bromley, Poplar and Canning Town ; also gifts of :**

EGGS.

For invalids and babies who are too ill to digest milk, and are given the white of egg beaten up in water.

ARROWROOT, BARLEY & RICE, BORACIC POWDER, BORACIC LINT, VASELINE, ZINC OINTMENT, COD LIVER OIL AND MALT, GLAXO AND VIROL.

**We lend necessitous mothers outfits for their babies, for the first months.**

FOR BABY.

Four gowns, four barrows, two flannel bands, twelve napkins, three vests and a cot blanket.

FOR MOTHER.

Two nightgowns, a woollen shawl, three towels, two sheets and one pair pillowcases.

*Doctor's attendances and baby weighing* 400 Old Ford Rd., Bow, Mondays 2.30 p.m.; 20 Railway St., Poplar, Mondays 3 p.m.; 53 St. Leonard's St., Thursdays 2.30 p.m.; 55 Fife Rd., Canning Town,

Mothers may have the leaflets on baby-feeding by applying at any of the centres.

## OUR COST-PRICE RESTAURANTS

**400 Old Ford Road, Bow, E.**
**20 Railway Street, Poplar.**
**53 St. Leonard's Street, Bromley.**

**Two-course meals 2d. (children 1d.)**
**Soup 1d. a pint with a piece of bread.**

## OUR FACTORY.

**Price lists for our toys, and shoes may be had on application to 400 Old Ford Road, Bow.**

Help us to produce skilled work at a living wage.

The Editor of the WOMAN'S DREADNOUGHT would be glad to hear from friends who would provide a temporary home in the country for two "War" mothers, in order that they may gain health and strength to face their new difficulties and responsibilities.

**PREPARING BABIES' MEDICINES.**

# Women's May Day

## In East London,

# SUNDAY, MAY 30th,

**PROCESSIONS FROM**

**Beckton Road, Canning Town .... 3 p.m.**

**East India Dock Gates .... .... 3.30 p.m.**

# GREAT DEMONSTRATION

## In VICTORIA PARK at 5 p.m.

**Miss SYLVIA PANKHURST. Mr. GEORGE LANSBURY.**

**Mrs. WALKER. Mrs. BOUVIER. Mrs. DRAKE.**
**Mrs. SCHLETTE. ALISON NEILANS.**
**Miss GILLIATT. Miss ELSA MYERS.**
**Miss FRAZER SMITH. Miss P. LYNCH.**
**Miss MARY RICHARDSON. Mr. SORENSEN.**
**Mrs. DUVAL. Mr. DAVID ROBERTS. Mrs. DAVIES.**

1. **THAT this Mass Meeting assembled in Victoria Park sends greetings to our Sisters who are striving for political and social emancipation in other lands, and declares its conviction that our first, most permanent and most urgent duty is to the great struggle for human development and human freedom that continues through all time.**

2. **THAT this Meeting further demands that where women are called on for War Service they shall receive the same pay, whether for piece or time rates, as the men whom they replace, and further insists that the principle of equal pay for equal work shall be established throughout the entire field of industry.**

3. **THAT in order that women may take their share with dignity and effect in solving the problems that confront the nation, both in war and peace, and in building up a better and freer life for the children of the future, the Parliamentary vote shall be extended to every adult woman.**

## GLORIOUS WAR SERVICE

The following letter appeared in the *Belfast Evening Telegraph* :—

Sir—It is the common report that female labour is now highly paid, and that their services are in great demand on account of the war and scarcity of male employees. Would you therefore kindly allow me to give my daughter's experiences, within a few days or so, while looking for a situation? The first reply to her in answer to an advertisment was from a branch P.O., which wanted an assistant. When she called in answer to the p.c., after a cross-examination, the last thing touched upon was salary, and the splendid figure for the first year was nil; second, a little, and as in all probability when the first year was near to completion another assistant would have been wanted. One cannot well get an assistant for much less than nothing. Perhaps it is as it should be, but people cannot really live on air. Next was a p.c. from a nursery for her to call. She called—alas! with the same result; at least she was told she would make no money there. Next was from a firm who wanted a person for printing photos. Result same—no money. Next was from a draper. Great success, 4s. weekly. This magnificent and highly-remunerative sum was declined with thanks. She might have got too rich and too proud upon it. No doubt these firms have given something to "The Prince of Wales's fund," bought a few flags on "Flag Day," and perhaps have managed to send a few men about their business to get them to join the Army. I do not know, but I am sure they are all patriots, and as such they are proud to get the girls of to-day to work for nil while the men are away fighting. I have heard before there are rich men in Belfast. No wonder when girls of 18 are offered salaries like these!

Yours &c., H. W.

## FRENCH GOVERNMENT NATIONALISES WHEAT.

On Friday, May 21st, the French Chamber of Deputies unanimously resolved upon the Government purchase of wheat, to supply the needs of the civil population, and to maintain bread at normal price and prevent speculation.

Mr. Thompson, Minister of Commerce, stated that wheat would be requisitioned by the Government, and paid for at 26s. 8d. per 100 kilogrammes (220 lbs.).

On May 19th in the House of Commons, Mr. Tickler stated that Egyptian Onions are being bought in London and sent to Germany via Holland, and that because they have this alternative market the merchants are putting the prices up and forcing English consumers to pay more.

This is another proof of the need for the nationalization of our food supply. Not for one instant can the traders be trusted to put patriotism before profit!

## TRYING TO MAKE BLACKLEGS OF FRENCH WOMEN.

In the House of Commons on May 19th, Mr. Will Thorne drew attention to the fact that Vickers of Barrow-in-Furness, Government contractors, are engaging French women to come to this country to work for them, although they have actually on their books the names of many women who live in the district and need work, also that the firm have dismissed twenty platers' helpers on the ground that there is no work for them to do.

**LEAGUE OF RIGHTS**
**For Soldiers' and Sailors' Wives and Relatives.**

**SOCIAL**
*Saturday, June 5th, 8 p.m.*

Tickets 3d. Refreshments at Popular Prices.

**LEAGUE OF RIGHTS**
**For Soldiers' and Sailors' Wives and Relatives.**

**MEETING**
**KNAPP ROAD L.C.C. SCHOOL,**
*Friday, June 4th, 8 p.m.*
SPEAKERS:
Miss SYLVIA PANKHURST, Mr. G LANSBURY,
Mrs. TANNER, Mr. A. A. WATTS,
Councillor BANKS.

**LEAGUE OF RIGHTS.**
**MEETING** to form a Branch
**LAKEDALE RD. ROOM,**
(PLUMSTEAD).
*Friday, June 18th, 8 p.m.*
SPEAKERS:
Mrs. DESPARD, Miss SYLVIA PANKHURST,
Mr. GEORGE LANSBURY, Mrs. THOMPSON.

The
**Woman's Dreadnought.**
*Published by the East London Federation of the Suffragettes,*
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**Annual Subscription: Post free, 4s. 6d.**

**Vol. II. No. 11.—Sat. May 29th, 1915.**

**Bravely and willingly we bear our share of the World's burdens. Why, then, deny us the right to Vote, which would dignify our labour and increase our Power of Service.**

## WHAT IS THE DANGER?

On the adjournment of Parliament for the Whitsuntide recess, the question of the food supply, which may one day obtrude itself so rudely that even the comfortably well-to-do will be unable to push it out of sight, was raised by Mr. Prothero.

He said that in his view "nothing matters to-day except the War," but that the prices of bread and meat may be "a serious factor in the War," because "those prices may rise to a height which may weaken the nation's determination" to carry the War to a complete victory.

We understand that Mr. Prothero has considerable practical experience of agriculture. He states that he has "devoted the best years of his life" to the industry, and Mr. J. M. Robertson, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade, offered a "meed of praise to his survey of the subject as a whole." We may, therefore, conclude that there is at least some truth in the picture of what is going on in regard to English farming and the buying and selling of farm produce that Mr. Prothero has given us.

He says that although the Government has ceased to buy wheat, in order that the British corn merchants may resume their normal trade, the merchants are buying as little as they can. They are "living from hand to mouth," he says, for fear the Government should suddenly place upon the market the wheat that it has bought, and so bring the prices down that the corn merchants would lose money on the stocks that they might have in hand.

It is most unlikely that the Government will do any such thing. If their intention is to use the wheat they have bought to keep prices down, why have they not done so before this? and why have they ceased their buying in favour of private merchants, if they have no regard for merchants' interests? Most probably Government has bought only for the use of the Army and Navy, and is leaving the civil population, as it usually does, to manage as best they can.

But the Government will not say how much wheat it has bought, and for what purpose, and, therefore, though the country may be brought to famine through the refusal of merchants to buy whilst ships are able to bring us corn, the merchants will not risk their money by buying more than they are absolutely certain that they can sell at a substantial profit. The result of this, Mr. Prothero says, is partly seen in the rise of wheat prices at the present moment.

One might have expected that, throwing all thought of self-interest to the winds, farmers would have turned their every inch of land and ounce of energy towards the building up of the nation's food supply, but, according to Mr. Prothero's explanations, they are no more patriotically inclined to risk their private pockets than are merchants. He tells us that, foreseeing a scarcity of labour, farmers are reducing their hay, corn and root crops, with the result that there is a scarcity of food for man and beast. Even a promise from the Government to buy all their wheat at a minimum price would not induce farmers to increase their wheat fields unless the promise should cover four years—"the usual farming shift."

Because the food of animals has thus grown dear, Mr. Prothero says that farmers have "sold every available animal," and adds, "the stock of live animals in this country has been brought, as I believe, to a very dangerous point." He says that meat will become both scarce and dear. He considers it cheap at present.

Mr. Prothero's depressing account of the nation's corn merchants and farmers was followed by complaints from Mr. Pennefather and Mr. James Hope, that somewhere about two-fifths of the merchant ships owned by British firms are being used for carrying food to foreign countries, although there is supposed to be a shortage of vessels to bring the food that is needed to these shores. As we know, even representatives of Conservative business men, like Mr. Bonar Law, have admitted that ship-owners are making enormous additional profits as a result of the War.

But what is the remedy suggested by Mr. Prothero to meet the present high prices and the greater difficulties that he believes will follow? It is that farmers shall be left undisturbed by any legislation to manage matters as they think fit for ten years. He says that if this is done, agriculturalists "will take up the question of food supplies with passionate goodwill." But let us remember that for generations past agriculturalists have been left practically to their own devices, with the result that the agricultural industry in this country is in an exceedingly backward state, as a visit, for instance, to little Denmark must convince anyone. Unfortunately, we see no reason to believe that any "passion" will be shown by agriculturalists but that of looking after their private interests. In fact, their lack of the spirit of co-operation has been so gross that it has greatly hindered their own private interests.

Mr. Prothero urges that the Government shall procure an approximate estimate of the amount of food required by the human beings and animals in this country, and shall lay this estimate before the farmers and merchants in order that they may provide all that is required.

But we realise that this will not solve the difficulties of providing the nation's food. The farmers and merchants are not for the most part large-minded heroes, capable of placing the nation's welfare above their private interests. In most cases their ideas are too restricted for gigantic undertakings. Farmers are frequently handicapped by lack of capital and up-to-date labour-saving machinery. Both farmers and merchants are blinded by the cruel old laws of supply and demand that have ruled their business undertakings. They are handicapped by their position as private traders with every other trader striving to secure an advantage over them.

From the point of view of the good of the whole nation, it is folly to allow these warring private elements to control the people's food. This is clearly illustrated by what has happened in regard to the Indian Wheat supply. The Government has become the exclusive merchant of Indian wheat. It can sell the wheat as cheaply as it pleases, but it has decided to sell it in the markets of this country at the current price of 67s. and 68s. a quarter. This protects the private corn merchant who can go on charging the present high prices for his wheat without being undercut by the Indian Government. The Government might have used Indian wheat to lower the prices and bring relief to the poor consumer. They have chosen instead to protect the corn merchant. In spite of this, the nation cannot fail to benefit through the nationalization of Indian wheat, because, instead of the profit that the Government makes going into the pockets of private speculators, it is turned into revenue and thus lessens the need for taxation.

But we do not wish the Government to proceed as it has done in selling Indian wheat. Such a way of procuring revenue is in reality to place an enormous tax on the people's food, a tax far greater than any that would be tolerated, even by most of the ardent protectionists, if levied directly.

The French Government has nationalized wheat.

We must demand that the British Government shall go further and that it shall nationalize the whole of our food supply. When this is done we shall have food at normal prices and at the same time the Government will be storing up revenue to relieve the heavy war taxes that the nation will soon be called upon to pay.

This is one of the first great tasks to which the so-called "National Government" should apply itself.

Though women are unrepresented in the Government, though we are not called in to join the Parliamentary councils, our power is growing. We are learning at last the value of combined organisation and our own rights and duties in the State.

Let us close up our ranks and join hands and hearts in demanding an equal share in controlling the destinies of our country, and of the world. Let us take our due part in politics, national and international, and let us remember that just at this moment we must press very urgently for the safeguarding of our children's food.

We must not imagine that the Government will do anything for us unless the pressure we use is very great, for the record of the men who form the Coalition Government shows that hitherto their efforts have been spent very largely in holding back reforms to benefit the masses of the people.

Which of these men has worked for the liberty of women?

E. SYLVIA PANKHURST.

## GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGED.

GENERAL FUND. Miss A. Uding £1, Miss Frisby (Self Denial Fund) 5.0, Tom Norris, Esq. (monthly) 5.0, Miss Howard (Self Denial Fund) 2.4½, Mrs. Hicks (Self Denial) 0.8, Mrs. Taylor (Self Denial) 0.6, Collection Hackney 13.2½.

FOR MILK AND GENERAL DISTRESS.—Mrs. Douglas-Hamilton 10.0.0, Miss A. M. Buchan 5.0.0, Miss E. H. Glover 2.12.0, E. P. Mosses, Esq. 2.0.0, London Small Arms 1.12.10, G. L. Thorp, Esq. 1.0.0, C. R. Farmer, Esq. 1.0.0, Mrs. Green 1.0.0, Miss M. Durrant (1.0 weekly) 1.0.0, Mrs. Bevan (2.6 weekly) 12.6, St. Edmund's School, Hindhead, per Miss Newman 10.0, Miss Yeoman (weekly) 10.0, Pte. A. E. Teagus 10.0, A Friend, per Miss N. Picton (5.0 monthly) 10.0, Anon, Stroud Green (weekly) 10.0, Miss Harbott 10.0, Miss I. V. Yeoman (weekly) 10.0, Mrs. Crabb collected 8.7, Ruby Crabb collected 5.9½, Mrs. Stone 5.0, A member collected 4.9½, Christian Endeavour Society, Lajolla, California 4.2, Mr. & Mrs. H. Reynolds 3.0, Misses Tollemache 2.6, Miss Russell 2.2, A well wisher 2.0, The Misses Wore 2.0, Mrs. Powles (weekly) 1.0, Miss C. Duckett 1.0, Mrs. Bird collected at Green's 10.7½, Mrs. Drake collected 11.0, Mrs. Tredget collected 4.4, Miss Seldon collected 0.5, Mrs. Richmond (weekly) 10.0.

CLOTHES, ETC. — Rev. T. E. Sandeman, Miss Frisby, Mrs. Halliday Gibson, Mrs. H. P. Lancaster, Miss Morgan Jones, Miss Leonora Williams, Miss D. Beedham.

GROCERIES.—Miss Batson, Mrs. Monck-Mason.

## THE COALITION GOVERNMENT.

A Coalition Government has been formed, and some newspapers have sought to glorify it by calling it a "National Government." This certainly it is not, for it contains no representatives of the women of the country. That is the big outstanding feature of the question.

We can hardly imagine that the Labour Party can agree to give the title of "National Government" to one in which they have but a single representative. It is rather humourous, though we are sure that he will acquit himself as well as his predecessors, that Mr. Arthur Henderson, the chairman of the Labour Party should have been chosen as President of the Board of Education. The Universities may begin protesting that their degrees are held worthless and their training slighted. But Mr. Henderson has the expert knowledge born of experience on labour questions and it is but just to say that he should rather have been sent to the Board of Trade or the Local Government Board. We learn that he is to advise the Government generally on labour questions and in this we believe he will find his chiefest difficulty. As head of his department a minister may be able to arrange many matters according to his conscience, but in the general councils of the Cabinet one man may always be outvoted and though he has been outvoted, will be blamed by the people outside for what the majority has decided. We believe that many members of the Parliamentary Labour Party and a large proportion of their supporters in the country will regret the fact that the Labour Party's Chairman has accepted a place in the coalition.

Mr. Redmond has adopted the safer course in staying outside, and will escape much criticism.

All suffragettes will be glad that Mr. McKenna is no longer at the Home Office.

It is interesting to see that Mr. Churchill has been placed in the comparative obscurity offered by the Duchy of Lancaster, and that Lord Haldane has been awarded the Order of Merit for retiring altogether.

We want to know whether this Coalition Government will agree to give women the vote, in order that they may effectively join in solving the problems of war, and whether it will proceed, with women's help, to nationalize the food supply.

## ITALY IN THE WAR.

Italy has at last verified the many predictions that she would throw herself into the European conflict. Like other nations, she has to sacrifice the life-blood of her people, but though every European nation has precious relics of past arts that cannot be replaced, Italy is richest in these, and the display of them to travellers is an industry which maintains large numbers of her people. The nation that goes to War must prepare herself for the possible destruction of all her treasures, however glorious and well-loved by the art adorers of the world.

Venice, beside her marble palaces, her wonderful carvings, paintings and mosaics, has an arsenal, and where there is an arsenal to-day, to-morrow a battle may be fought. Indeed, as soon as War was declared Austria's hostile aircraft proceeded to this arsenal.

It may be that a nation's greatest wealth is in her living people, and perhaps it is not good for her to dwell too much on the beauties of bygone times. Yet her immortal masterpieces are the fruit of the souls of the greatest of her people, and the posterity of all lands would be poorer indeed for the loss of the noble works of the great minds of Venice, of Florence, and of Rome.

**After the Victoria Park Demonstration, Tea at popular prices will be provided at the Women's Hall, 400 Old Ford Road, Bow.**

## HOW THE WAR OFFICE DOES IT.

When War broke out the "unmarried wives" of soldiers and sailors, and their children, were refused separation allowance. Public sympathy was aroused on behalf of these women and children, and, in response to a widespread and persistent agitation, the War Office agreed in October to pay separation allowance to those of the women and children who had been supported by the soldiers and sailors prior to the War.

It happened that in one case—there are probably other such cases—the War Office did not know, because they had not asked that, a certain man and woman were not legally married. Separation allowance was, therefore paid from the date of the man's enlistment on August 3rd. Just recently it was discovered that the woman is not legally married. The War Office could not refuse to pay her separation allowance, because the promise of October 1st entitled her to it. But the allowance was stopped for two months, because she had the money in August and September, before the promise had been given!

In another case a woman's separation allowance and allotment was stopped for a month, beginning in the middle of March, because her husband had been sentenced to 28 days' punishment for some paltry breach of discipline at the front. At one time such cases were common, but in response to many protests the War Office promised, on March 1st, not to penalise the wives and children for offences committed by the soldiers.

First, the woman herself, and then the League of Rights for Soldiers' and Sailors' Wives and Relatives, on her behalf, wrote to remind the War Office of its promise. At first it was replied that the soldier's offence had been committed in January, and, therefore, though it had been promised not to punish women and children so in future, this woman and her children must do without their money now. Then it was agreed to pay half the separation allowance, but not the allotment. Several letters passed, but beyond paying two weeks' allotment, both the Paymaster and the War Office refused to budge.

Letters continued to pass, and on May 19th, the War Office woke up to the fact that owing to its own original orders, made before the new promise of March 1st, it might not withold separation allowance, unless the soldier was sentenced for a period *exceeding 28 days*. It therefore paid up the further two weeks' separation allowance that it had illegally withheld for three months, but still refused to pay the four week's allotment.

In another case a wife was informed that her husband's allotment would cease for a year, because her husband had been sentenced to a year's imprisonment for a breach of discipline. She wrote in desperate grief to know what had happened, and a day or two later learnt that her husband had been killed at the front. How is this possible if he was in prison?

In the House of Commons on May 19th, Mr. Wing asked that the War Office should allow separation allowance to begin from the date of the soldier's making an allotment to his dependents, and not from the date of filling up Army Form 1838, as many soldiers have not realized the necessity of filling up this form. Mr. Harold Baker refused to agree to this reasonable request.

## WOMEN'S COMMITTEE REFUSED

At the Conference on Women's organisations which Mr. Runciman summoned to the Board of Trade on April 13th to discuss the question of the Registration of Women for War Service, almost every Society asked that an advisory committee should be set up. In the House of Commons on May 19th, in reply to a question by Mr. Snowden, Mr. Runciman refused to do this.

## SOLDIERS' WIVES v. SAILORS' WIVES.

The grant of separation allowance to the wife of a sailor is dependent on the sailor's making an allotment in her favour. As the allotment is not compulsory, the sailor has thus the power to deprive his wife of both separation allowance and allotment. A few men are mean enough to do this, although the majority gladly make the allotment and wish the money that comes to their wives were more than it is.

In the case of soldiers the allotment is compulsory and the separation allowance is therefore secured.

Dr. Macnamara, on behalf of the Admiralty, refuses to introduce legislation to put soldiers and sailors and their wives upon an equal footing.

Sailors should write to the Admiralty to urge that this shall be done. Every woman should see the local Member of Parliament about this.

## WOMEN FOR WAR SERVICE.

It was announced on the 21st of May that 65,700 women had registered for War Service, and that 1,250 women had been placed in employment. Why then are the women employed in armament factories forced to work such excessively long hours? Surely it is essential that the making of munitions should be distributed amongst a larger number of workers—if only from the point of view of replacing those who, at the present inhuman rate of pressure, will soon be broken down!

Miss Thornton, senior organising officer for women's work in York and the East Midlands Division, lecturing at the Town Hall Northallerton, stated that as a result of the overtime that men and women are working on Army contracts, the Government had found that instead of the output being greater than in normal times, it is actually decreasing.

Some idea of the awful cost of the War in labour and materials is presented to our minds by her statement that the life of a soldier's uniform in the trenches is only a fortnight.

## EQUAL PAY & LIBERAL WOMEN

At the Annual Meeting of the Women's Liberal Federation in the Caxton Hall, Mrs. Walter Runciman moved a resolution that when women are paid on time rates, wages equal to those paid to men should be given to women for equal value of work.

Neither the Government nor its contractors have yet adopted this principle. The very fact that a woman is a woman is, to them, a sufficient reason for paying her less, even where she is actually doing more work than a man.

But we do not like the resolution—it is unpractical. How many employers of labour are able to state precisely the exact amount of work of every kind performed by every one of their men, who was paid so much a week and not employed on time rates?

Moreover it is unfair to the woman, because it allows her employer to assess the value of her services as compared with those of the man who has left, whilst she, because she was not there to see for herself what the man did, will not have the opportunity to put the other side.

The only safe and fair principle for which to work, is, that where a woman is employed in the place of a man, she shall receive the same piece work rates, if she is paid by the piece, and the same time rates if paid by time.

## EQUAL PAY and Mr. GOLDSTONE, M.P.

On May 18th, a meeting of shopkeepers was called at Halifax to consider how best to "set free" young men employees.

Over 400 invitations were sent out, but less than 40 shopkeepers attended. To our way of thinking, the most sensible speech was made by Mr. T. M. Maher, who inquired by what right an employer should ask his employee to sacrifice his life whilst he himself was doing nothing? "The man who preached the doctrine of duty should be the first to do it."

A speaker suggested that shopkeepers, who were paying men £2 a week, might take in their places women at 30s., and pay the balance of 10s., to increase the separation allowances to the soldier shopmen's wives and children.

The *Halifax Daily Guardian* reports that Mr. Goldstone (Labour M.P. for Sunderland) characterised this suggestion as "entirely admirable."

We are surprised to learn that Mr. Goldstone should have expressed this view. Promises by employers to increase the separation allowances to the families of men at the front are in no way binding, and we know of cases in which, already, they have been broken. Moreover, what is to happen if, as is probable, the man is killed as soon as he gets to the front? Will the weekly 10s. return to the pocket of the employer?

The danger of establishing the view that it is justifiable to engage women to take the places of men at a lower wage is a very grave one, from the standpoint both of the women and of the men.

We hope that if Mr. Goldstone expressed the views attributed to him, he will reconsider the question in all its bearings and change his mind.

## EQUAL PAY and Mr. NIELD, M.P.

Mr. Herbert Nield, K.C., M.P. for Ealing (Middlesex), speaking at a Birmingham recruiting meeting, on May 20th, said it had been argued that if women took the places of men they should be paid the same wages; but this, in his opinion, was not a legitimate contention.

The women of Mr. Nield's constituency should see him about this!

## NO REDRESS FOR FISHER LASSIES.

It is reported that 2,500 fisherwomen from Lewis and Harris will have no work this year. The fishing season nominally begins on May 10th, and lasts till Christmas. The women who gut and pack the herrings follow the craft from the Shetlands and Orkney to Lowerstoft and Yarmouth. They make from 10s. to £3 a week during the season. The owners of fishing vessels receive compensation, but there is no compensation for the women whose trade has been destroyed.

## OLD AGE PENSIONER IMPRISONED FOR DEBT.

The Government still stubbornly refuses to increase the Old Age Pension to meet the higher cost of living.

In the House of Commons on May 19th, Mr. Will Thorne called attention to the fact that Mrs. Baker of 89 Commerce Road, an old age pensioner of 73, has been committed to Holloway for non-payment of rates.

Mr. Thorne asked Mr. McKenna to release her, but he said "I have no power."

What a scandal it is that such a thing is allowed to happen! Several old age pensioners have recently died of starvation.

Before Parliament meets again, you should see your local Member and tell him that the Government must nationalise the food supply and keep the prices down and that the Old Age Pension must be raised!

Where persons have been imprisoned for non-payment of rates, McKenna says that application for their release should be made to the overseers, or in London, to the Borough Councils. Let us see what the result will be.

Dr. Macnamara stated on May 19th that Messrs. Spillers and Bakers, the Cardiff millers who last year made a profit of £80,000, and this year of £300,000, had received since the beginning of the war six War Office contracts for flour totalling 1,600 tons, and two orders for biscuits totalling 220 tons. The War Office refuses to name the prices paid for these goods.

**GIVE THIS PAPER TO A FRIEND.**

## The Man with the Hoe; not forgetting his Wife and Children

During the past two years or so the problem of the agricultural labourer has loomed large in the public eye. The Great Land Campaign, which was to do so much for his welfare—some day—drew attention to the fact that he had some grievances. Better still (since politicians have a habit of sometimes forgetting the promises made when they are vote hunting), the agricultural labourer has himself drawn attention to them by indulging in two strikes during the course of the last summer, which, small things though they were compared with the enormous conflicts that sometimes compel the attention of mine owners, railway directors, and other huge employers of labour, were rightly regarded as being highly significant signs of the times. They were almost unheard of and unthought of actions—scarcely anybody dreamt that agricultural labourers would or could strike. Some people even wondered what on earth the agricultural labourer was striking for, they thought he was so happy and contented. Well, he showed that he wasn't. And unless things change for the better within a very short period it is very probable that he will show it again. The position of the enlightened labourer, bad as it was before the War, is being rendered intolerable by the increase in the cost of living occasioned by the recent rise in prices.

Now there is a very prevalent idea that the cost of living in the country districts is low. This idea soon evaporates when one comes to live in the country, for one finds prices practically the same as in the large towns, and some things much dearer. Money in the country districts to-day is certainly going no further than it would in the towns. The only difference is that there is much less money in the rural districts, as I shall show a little later on. Anyhow, readers of the DREADNOUGHT can judge for themselves. Here is a list of prices in the villages and small towns of North Essex, within 40 miles of London, as they were at the end of July last and as they are in this, the second week of February. Prices are still rising, especially coal, which, by the time this is in print, will no doubt be over 2s. per cwt., and bread and flour 8d. and 8½d. per quartern:—

| | Price in July 1914. | | Price in Feb. 1915. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | s | d | s | d |
| Bread | 0 | 5½ per qrtn. | 0 | 7½ per qrtn. |
| Flour | 0 | 5½ ,, | 0 | 7½ ,, |
| Butter | 1 | 2 per lb. | 1 | 6 per lb. |
| Dripping | 0 | 6 ,, | 0 | 7 ,, |
| Tea | 1 | 4 ,, | 1 | 7 ,, |
| ,, | 1 | 6 ,, | 1 | 9 ,, |
| Sugar (loaf) | 0 | 3 ,, | 0 | 4 ,, |
| ,, (gr'nultd.) | 0 | 2 ,, | 0 | 3½ ,, |
| Milk (cond.) | 0 | 3 per tin. | 0 | 4 per tin. |
| Cheese | 0 | 8 per lb. | 0 | 10 per lb. |
| Pork | 0 | 8 ,, | 0 | 10 ,, |
| Bacon 11d—1s 2d | 1 | 2 ,, | 1 | 6 ,, |
| Puddg. Beef | 0 | 8 ,, | 0 | 9 ,, |
| Coal | 1 | 4 per cwt. | 1 | 8 per cwt. |
| Parafin | 0 | 9 per gal. | 0 | 10 per gal. |

I do not give the price of steak, because, as one agricultural labourer said to me the other day: "The only steaks we see are Hurdle Stakes!" Readers can guess this for themselves by considering how far money will go at the above prices and comparing the result with the amount which the agricultural labourer's wife has to go on.

Now this amount varies in different parts of the country. This can be easily seen to be the fact from the following figures, relating to the highest and lowest wage-paying counties in the list of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union:—

| Highest. | s | d | Lowest. | s | d |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lancashire | 22 | 3 | Somerset | 14 | 6 |
| Yorkshire | 22 | 0 | Cambridge | 14 | 6 |
| Middlesex | 19 | 0 | Suffolk | 14 | 0 |
| Cheshire | 18 | 2 | Wilts | 14 | 0 |
| Kent | 18 | 0 | Dorset | 13 | 6 |
| Notts | 16 | 7 | Oxford | 12 | 6 |

These are the wages actually paid per week, on the average. But to these have to be added those extra earnings, which we are never allowed to forget—harvest money, overtime, in some cases a free cottage, free beer at times of extra pressure. All

*(Continued on page 256, col. 2).*

## DISTRICT REPORTS.

### BOW.

400 Old Ford Road, Bow.

Thanks to speakers, *Dreadnought* sellers and bill distributors who went out in the Decorated Cart on Saturday, to advertise the Women's May Day demonstration. Large and interested audiences were addressed at six pitches, and 30 papers sold. The Decorated Cart will go through Bow and Hackney on Saturday, May 29th, starting at 4 p.m. sharp from 400 Old Ford Road. Miss Cohen has kindly undertaken to take out a boat on the lake, on Saturday, May 29th, 3 p.m. Two helpers are required in the boat, and bill distributors and paper-sellers in the park. Who will volunteer? Will every member make up her mind to march in the procession, joining at the East India Dock Gates at 3.30 p.m.? Bow members are specially asked to go to the Dock Gates, and Poplar members are asked to start at Beckton Road. Don't forget Club night on Friday at 8. Send in your names to 400 Old Ford Road for paper-selling and banner-bearing on May 30th. Chalking should be done on a large scale on Friday and Saturday. Junior Suffragettes as well as E.L.F.S. members, should help in this way, particularly, as Miss Beamish (Bow Organiser) is absent through illness.

*Dreadnought* sales, week ending May 24th—301. Mrs. Crabb 76, Mrs. Savoy 50, Miss O'Brien 126, Mrs. Farrall 40.

### POPLAR.

The Women's Hall, 20 Railway St.
*Organiser:* Mrs. Drake.

At the General Members Meeting held on Monday, May 17th, members decided unanimously to support the May Day Demonstration. A number of Poplar Members said they will start from Canning Town, and it is hoped that as many as possibly can, from other districts, will join up at Dock Gates.

We had an excellent meeting in Chrisp Street on Wednesday evening, when Mr. Everett was the speaker. Six papers sold.

On Friday afternoon Mrs. Tyson was the speaker at the indoor meeting.

At the Dock Gates, Poplar; Morton's, Millwall; Piggott Street, Limehouse; and Beckton Road, Canning Town, we held splendid meetings with the Decorated Cart, on Friday, from 4 p.m. till 9.30 p.m.

*Dreadnoughts* sold week ending May 22nd—154. Self-Denial—Nurse Connolly 3s. 7½d., Patients 11½d., Mrs. Hicks 8d., Mrs. Taylor 6d. Collections—Mrs. Bird 10s. 7½d., Mrs. Drake 11s.

Miss Atkinson, a sympathiser, is thanked for her present of Babies' Bibs and Rollers, and we hope to see her at our meetings. This lady presented them while we were in the Decorated Cart.

### BROMLEY.

*Joint Hon. Secretaries:*
Mrs. McCheyne & Mrs. Mantle,
53 St. Leonard Street.

Miss Richardson spoke to a very large and interested audience on Thursday, about Prison Life, and how the Vote would benefit the working woman. It was very nice to see so many fresh faces amongst those who usually attend the meetings, we hope to see even more next week. Everyone must be sure to join the Women's May Day procession on Sunday next, as we should like to see Bromley well represented.

Will you all be sure to buy your *Dreadnought*, as we want the sale to go up rapidly in Bromley?

### HACKNEY.

*Offices:* 175 Dalston Lane
(Facing Hackney Downs Station).
Papers can be obtained at this address at any time.

Hackney members must be congratulated on the success of their meeting at Old Gravel Pit Hall last Thursday.

A good meeting was held at Lesbia Road last Wednesday by Mrs. Walker. Will members please rally round the open-air meeting on Monday evening at Lesbia Road at 8 p.m. Very useful work can be done by speaking to people in the audience who are interested, and by giving them a personal invitation to our meetings. One regular subscriber and two prospective members were made in this way last Wednesday evening, but more could be done with more workers.

Should members who have already taken bills for the demonstration, want more, please send to 400 Old Ford Road, Bow, at once.

Will every Hackney member please bring as many friends as possible to the Demonstration in Victoria Park on Sunday, and make at least one subscriber to our paper every week.

Papers sold 81. Distributed 50.

### SOUTH WEST HAM.

Centre for Tidal Basin and Custom House—
55 Fife Road, Tidal Basin.
*Hon. Sec.*—Mrs. Daisy Parsons,
94 Ravenscroft Road.

Our members' meeting on Thursday was addressed by Miss Smyth, who ably set people to work chalking, billing and going in Decorated Cart. On Friday, 14th, a remarkable meeting was held at Beckton Road corner, Miss Lynch taking the chair. The audience was addressed by Miss Pankhurst, Mrs. Drake and Mrs. Walker, and 38 papers were sold. Last Friday, Mrs. Bouvier and Mrs. Drake spoke from a Decorated Cart. Now who will look up absent members, collect subscriptions, or distribute *Dreadnoughts*. All members are asked to be at Beckton Road on Sunday at 2.45, to march to Victoria Park.

We are glad to be able to announce that Miss Olive Beamish has been operated on successfully, and that she is making good progress.

### SOUTH-EAST LONDON E.L.F.S.

*Hon. Secretary:* Miss Balchin,
39 Radnor Street, Peckham.

The speakers at open-air meeting at Avondale Square on Thursday evening, were listened to by a large and attentive crowd, and *Dreadnoughts* were sold out. Friends and members are asked to note that indoor meetings are still being held in Kempshead Road Hall; the Secretary would like to see much larger audiences. Our speaker next Wednesday will be Mr. McQuown. Will any good friend volunteer to do some canvassing or bill distributing in order to make this branch more widely known in this part of London?

(*Continued from page* 255. *col.* 4.)

together these would make the total earnings (or rather total *gettings*) of the agricultural labourer 2s. to 3s. per week above the figures given, and that amount multiplied by 52 is the total reward of a man's labour for one whole year, six whole days per week, including all overtime and extras whatsoever.

Here in North Essex, in most places, the wages are 14s. per week, plus the "extras" mentioned, but in all those parishes where the men belong to the Union wages are 15s. (this magnificent sum being secured after a seven weeks' strike). Note—18 months ago wages in North Essex were 13s., and would be 13s. to-day but for the work of a few reviled agitators! Prices were then much as in July last year, of course. I need only add that out of this sum (sometimes diminished by time lost in wet weather and not paid for) the agricultural labourer's wife has to provide everything needed in the home—food, clothes, boots, coals, parafin, etc.—pay in most cases a rent varying from 1s. to 2s. 3d. per week for a two- or three-roomed cottage (often only fit to be burned down, but which the tenant must keep in repair inside); that the average family is father, mother and five children. Charing and washing, those delightful occupations which women of the poorer classes are expected to undertake to supplement the family income, are paid for at the rate of 1s. 3d. to 1s. 6d. *for a whole day's work*, and few can earn this, because there are very few people to wash and clean for. Readers can imagine the sort of life the agricultural labourer's family enjoys; the endless worry and anxiety the agricultural labourers' wives have to face. Yet they face it all with an amount of fortitude which is amazing. Long suffering has often driven from them, as from many others, even the spirit of resentment that their lot should be merely that of a drudge.

Nor does this chronic poverty merely affect a few thousand people, though, even if it did, that would be no excuse for its existence. We are so much accustomed to thinking of England as "the workshop of the world" that we do not realise that agriculture still employs more men than any other one industry. There are still over 600,000 agricultural labourers alone on the land of England and Wales, to say nothing of shepherds and other workers, and these men with their families form a huge class, of something like 3,000,000 people. That is to say, that the number of people who have to depend on the wages given above is equal to about half the total population of London, and actually constitutes one-eleventh of the total population of England and Wales together. Moreover, the agricultural labourer is a skilled worker, engaged in a craft which it takes years to master. Those who think otherwise and that anybody can get on to a field and work it, and bring forth food, have only to refer to the amount spent on labour colonies to see that it takes time to teach a man those things which an agricultural labourer has to know.

The one considerable advantage that the agricultural labourer has over the town worker is that he can often grow all or most of the vegetables he needs—not always, since pieces of ground are often hard to get even at high prices. His cottage garden is usually small, and he must hire another piece of land, if he can get a piece. So he does not get his vegetables for nothing; and he must attend to them, or most of them, *in his spare time*. For his recreation he continues to do the same sort of work that he has been doing all day—and his working-day is about 11½ or 12 hours long! Yet people sometimes point to this vegetable growing, and actually want the value of the vegetables he grows on his own land in his spare time to be taken into consideration when his wages are discussed. Nor can man live on vegetables alone. If he could, the agricultural labourer hasn't got either the time or the land to grow all he would need. And so he and his exist in a state of semi-starvation.

The man who works on the land must be fed as well as may be, for how otherwise could he work? The wife and children "manage" as best can be on what is left; poorly fed, poorly clothed, poorly developed. How can it be otherwise?

Only yesterday a school mistress told me what had happened at her school. It was very wet. Out of over 100 children only 75 managed to get to school at all, *and every child who did arrived with soaking feet*. Their boots and shoes were worn out; and where is the money to buy more so long as the old ones can be worn at all? Being a human being and not a mere official machine, this mistress abandoned all lessons until she had dried the boots and stockings, and poor little feet. She also sent to one of the school managers, the Rector of the parish, on "urgent business," and asked him what he thought of it, and whether he didn't think this state of affairs *was* urgent. He expressed himself to the effect that he thought sending for him on this errand, and calling it "urgent business" was "beyond the limit"; for the rest, he had no idea that things were so bad. And he has been Rector of that parish for years!

The children also had their lunch (which is their dinner, as, owing to the long distances, children in the country often do not go home till after school is finished for the day) in the school. It consisted in every case of dry bread, with a scraping of jam or a small piece of cheese—and both jam and cheese were *Army brand*; jam and cheese supplied to troops billeted in the neighbourhood, and given by the soldiers to the parents. One wonders what the children would have had if there had been no troops about! One thing is certain—they would have had nothing except what their parents could give them; for they save the rates in the country and have nothing to do with "damned Socialist ideas" like the feeding of school children! Yet people sometimes wonder why so many village children look poor and sickly!

But if there is plenty of water brought home in the children's boots, there is by no means a plentiful supply in the cottages. One of the agricultural labourer's wife's greatest troubles is the lack of water for drinking, and sometimes for cleaning. Water is not laid on in country places; pumps are few and far between; often drainage brooks and ponds have to serve both for cleaning and drinking; and even then it is no unusual thing to find, especially in dry weather, that every drop of water has to be fetched a quarter of a mile and over, and even a mile, in buckets. And the sanitary arrangements are of the most primitive description.

Nor is it only from low wages, rotten cottages, insufficient water, that the agricultural labourer and his wife suffer. They and theirs suffer most from the loneliness of their position, from their being out of touch with the great world of thought, and activity and progress, which naturally centres in the towns. Newspapers are rare; daily newspapers almost unknown; the Sunday paper and the local or county weekly furnishing all the food for reflection on current events that comes their way. Books are rarer still: the habit of reading is lost; the one social joy is the tap-room of the village pub, where agricultural labourers, but not their wives, meet and talk. Yet even with this one common meeting ground, the agricultural labourer is often out of real touch with his fellow villagers. Cottages are scattered; his work is often solitary; and so he often gets to be reticent and suspicious, afraid of his fellow workmen and afraid of those above him. I know this is often questioned, but when one has heard men say they are afraid to join a trade union because they think their neighbours will use the knowledge to do them an injury, and when one has seen 27 men in one village sacked at a week's notice, and having to move ten and more miles away to get a job, in consequence of joining a trade union and for no other reason, one knows it for the fact—and one understands it. The fear may often be groundless, *but it is there*, and acts as a powerful deterrent. Long years of oppression has often broken the spirit; the strongest willed men have in many cases shaken the dust of the country-side off their feet, and gone either to the great towns or the Colonies, and the residue contains, necessarily, a big percentage of poor quality men and women, especially men. It is surprising that so many fine spirits remain; but there is often in the heart of the rural worker an intense love of the land and the work on the land, and he will submit to much rather than leave it. I often think he has retained more of the love of his craft than the mass of other workers, who regard themselves so often as mere machines, doing a job in which they feel no personal interest.

The labourer has trusted his "betters" to increase his wages; he has trusted them with the reins of Government; and elected them, and them alone, to the Parish Council, the Rural District Council, the Board of Guardians, the County Council and the House of Commons. The result of his trustfulness is that to-day he stands the poorest and the most neglected class of worker in the country. Now he feels it is time to take a hand in things himself, with the help of such as will really help him.

In conclusion, a word about the proposal to allow children to be taken away from school to assist on farms in those districts where labour is scarce. In the first place, it is denied by the National Agricultural Labourers' Union that any such scarcity exists at the moment as to render such a step necessary. It is maintained that sufficient labour can be obtained if a higher wage is offered, if conditions on the land are made sufficiently attractive. This may be so, probably is so, certainly is so, at the moment, in this district. But if more men go to the War—and more will go, attracted not only by the call of the Recruiter, but by the knowledge that their wives and children will be better off if they go than they will if they don't go—it seems certain that such a shortage of labour will arise sooner or later. Then some such step is inevitable if the land is to be cultivated and food provided. But such a necessity must be delayed till the last possible moment. For the present we must raise our voices to demand that wages shall be raised and kept raised. And if after that the employment of children must come, we must regard it as the fearful penalty we have to pay for allowing hundreds of thousands of workers to be driven to the towns and for our not being able to settle the quarrels of our Statesmen, and Financiers, and Empire builders in any other way than by sending millions of workers to kill and maim each other, and we must reform our ways accordingly or continue to pay such penalties. I wonder whether if women had had some say in these things it would be different? Charles Jenkinson.

[We think that the wife and sister of "the man with the hoe" would prefer to take up the work on the land, should the necessity arise, rather than allow the children to be driven to it, but wherever women take up the work of men, we trust that they will demand a man's wage. —*Editor of the* Woman's Dreadnought.]

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